

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 08468 290807Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----124957 292147Z /66  
R 281251Z OCT 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8956  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 8468

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
SUBJECT: JORDAN MAQARIN AND POTASH PROJECTS

1. AID ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR WHEELER ACCOMPANIED  
BY E/C COUNSELOR HART CALLED ON MOSHE ALON IN  
JERUSALEM OCTOBER 26. ALON TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO  
DISCUSS SUBJECT PROJECTS.

2. ON POTASH, ALON RECALLED VARIOUS ISRAELI INFORMAL  
ACTIONS TO COOPERATE WITH JORDANIANS ON THEIR PRO-  
JECT. HE EMPHASIZED HIS CONCLUSION THAT PRO-  
JECT/ AS HE UNDERSTANDS IT TO BE PLANNED, IS UN-  
ECONOMIC. WITH A COORDINATED APPROACH INVOLVING  
JOINT USE OF A MAJOR PORTION OF ISRAELI DIKE, MAJOR  
SAVINGS COULD BE MADE. HOWEVER, FOR SUCH COOPERA-  
TION TO TAKE PLACE, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR QUIET  
TALKS WITH JORDANIANS.

3. WHEELER TOLD ALON THAT IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH  
CHAIRMAN OF JORDAN POTASH PROJECT, LATTER ACKNOW-  
LEDGED AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR INDIRECT  
QUERIES ON POSSIBLE COOPERATION; BUT THAT POLITI-  
CAL SENSITIVITIES, BASED ON ASSUMPTION SUCH CO-  
OPERATION WOULD BECOME PUBLIC, MADE THIS IMPOSSIBLE.  
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 08468 290807Z

AT SAME TIME, POTASH CHAIRMAN HAD INDICATED THAT  
A STUDY HAD BEEN DONE OF POSSIBLE SAVINGS ON  
JOINT USE OF DIKE WHICH INDICATED THIS NOT VERY AD-  
VANTAGEOUS IN VIEW OF THE NEED TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM  
FOR BOTH ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN PLANTS TO DRAIN  
EFFLUENTS FROM PROCESSING PLANTS BACK TO  
DEAD SEA.

4. ALON THEN DISCUSSED ISRAELI CONSIDERATION OF PROJECTS TO BRING MEDITERRANEAN WATER TO DEAD SEA. HE INDICATED THAT FEASIBILITY STUDY ON "SOUTHERN" ROUTE (ASHKELON TO THE DEAD SEA) WOULD BE FINISHED SOON. AT SAME TIME, THERE HAS BEEN GROWING INTEREST IN A CANAL FROM HAIFA TO THE JORDAN RIVER JUST SOUTH OF LAKE TIBERIAS WHICH WOULD SERVE NAVIGATION AND POWER GENERATING PURPOSES. APPARENTLY, BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORIZED EXPEDITURES FOR MORE DETAILED FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THIS "NORTHERN" OPTION. ALON CLAIMED THAT THESE IDEAS COULD WELL RESULT IN SPECIFIC PROJECT DECISIONS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY WOULD REQUIRE CLOSE COORDINATION WITH JORDAN IN VIEW OF THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LEVEL OF THE DEAD SEA.

5. WHEELER NOTED THAT JORDANIANS DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE RECEDING LEVEL OF THE DEAD SEA SINCE THEY, IN ANY CASE, PLAN TO PUMP WATER INTO DIKES FROM 40 OR 50 FT. BELOW DEAD SEA LEVEL. HE ALSO ASKED ALON WHETHER A SERIOUS STUDY HAD BEEN DONE ON A RED SEA TO DEAD SEA OPTION. ALON INDICATED THAT THIS WAS COMPLETELY OUT OF THE QUESTION FROM AN ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW. WHEELER TOLD ALON THAT THE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR JORDAN POTASH WOULD BE COMPLETED IN DECEMBER AND THAT DONORS COULD ONLY MAKE JUDGMENTS ABOUT THE ECONOMICS OF THE PROJECT AT THAT TIME.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 08468 290807Z

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6. ON MAQARIN, ALON MADE STRONG STATEMENT ABOUT POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE PROJECT PROCEEDING WHILE EMPHASIZING NEED FOR QUIET TALKS TO RESOLVE TECHNICAL POINTS. WHEELER NOTED THAT JORDANIANS NOW HAVE THE LATEST ISRAELI PRESENTATION AND THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO EXPECT A RESPONSE FROM THEM. HE NOTED THAT ON RIPARIAN QUESTIONS THERE IS A NEED FOR ACCOMMODATION OF ESSENTIALLY OPPOSED POSITIONS AND HOPED THAT SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING COULD BE REACHED QUICKLY IN ORDER TO AVOID DELAYS IN PROCEEDING WITH THE PROJECT. HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD INSPECTED THE SITE OF THE WEIR ON THE YARMUK RIVER WHERE THE JORDAN INTAKE IS LOCATED AND WHERE THE ISRAELIS WOULD RECEIVE WATER FOR YARMUK TRIANGLE.

7. COMMENT: IT WAS QUITE CLEAR FROM DISCUSSIONS THAT

THESE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITHIN THE  
GOI AT HIGHEST LEVEL. ISRAEL SEEMS TO HAVE ADOPTED  
SOME OF LIMITED COOPERATION, WITH NEXT INITIATIVE  
ON BOTH PROJECTS CLEARLY UP TO JORDANIANS. ISRAELIS  
FEEL POTASH PROJECT UNECONOMIC WITHOUT JOINT COOPERATION  
WHILE JORDANIANS TAKE OPPOSITE VIEW.  
WHILE EXPERIENCE IN OTHER AREAS LEAVES US DOUBTFUL  
THAT SO-CALLED PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS COULD BE KEPT  
OUT OF NEWSPAPERS, ALON EMPHASIZED WILLINGNESS TO  
KEEP SUCH DISCUSSIONS QUIET.  
LEWIS

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977TELAV08468  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Page Count:** 3  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009